

Invent a country

Topic

Features of a country

Learning outcomes

- Use vocabulary related to describing a country in speaking and writing
- Develop planning and teamworking skills
- Present an invented country to classmates

Age and level

9-12 (A1+)

Time

Approximately 70 minutes

Materials

- Student worksheet (optional)
- Materials for poster: paper, coloured pencils, glue, scissors, etc. (set per group of learners) and chart paper (one sheet per group)

Introduction

In this lesson, learners think about some of the features of their own country, then work together in groups to brainstorm ideas for a new country. Then they work in new groups to plan and produce a poster for their new country and use it to present their country to the class. There is an assumption that learners will have already studied some related language and are familiar with the present simple and simple conjunctions such as 'so' and 'because'.

A worksheet is available for this lesson, but alternatives are suggested for a no-printing option.

Procedure
1. Introducing the topic (5 minutes)

- Ask learners to say what they like about their country. Encourage them to think about different kinds of things e.g. their town / village / city or other places they've visited; the geography of the country; the weather; the food; traditions etc. Add any new vocabulary to the board.

2. Familiarising with categories (10-15 minutes)

- If learners are from the same country, organise them into pairs or small groups. If they are from different countries, they can work individually.
- Give each learner / pair / group a copy of the student worksheet or draw the following table on the board and tell learners to copy it into their notebooks. You can do this anyway to provide an example for your class:

NAME OF COUNTRY		
CAPITAL CITY		

- Tell learners to look at the first row of the table. Learners write their country's name in the second column (next to NAME OF COUNTRY). They write the name of their capital city in the second row of the table. Ask some questions about it: What's it like? Is it big, noisy, exciting? Learners add some notes about the city to the table, for example:

NAME OF COUNTRY	Poland	
CAPITAL CITY	Warsaw – busy, old and modern, very big	

- **Option 1 (using worksheet):** If learners are using the student worksheet, they complete the second column with notes about their country. Depending on the level of your learners, you could do this together with the whole class, or they can complete the table themselves. If so, you may need to review some vocabulary before they start e.g. currency, traditions. Walk around and help learners as they work.
- **Option 2 (not using worksheet):** If learners don't have the worksheet, keep adding rows to the table on the board. Students copy each row and complete with notes. You could do this as a whole class, or learners can complete it by themselves. Add rows for: currency, weather, geography, food, traditions, activities. See the student worksheet for an example of the full table.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If learners have completed the table themselves, ask some to provide answers for each row of the table. • Ask learners to put a smiley face next to the things they like (the learners in each pair or group could use a different colour pen), then compare with another pair or group to see if they like the same things.
3. Generating ideas (5-10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now tell learners that they are going to invent a new country. Tell them it needs to be an interesting country because they will need to get people to come and live there! • As a class, brainstorm ideas for one of the categories from the table e.g. for weather: it's sunny every day, it rains lemonade in summer, in winter the snow never blocks the street, etc. Demonstrate that they can use their imaginations. • Put learners in groups and, depending on how many learners you have, assign one or two of the categories to each group (except for 'name'): capital city, currency, geography, food, traditions, activities. • Give learners two minutes to brainstorm ideas for their category in groups. Encourage creativity, e.g. food – candy pizza, cheese sausages; traditions – jumping up and down when you say hello, a special holiday every year to celebrate unicorns; currency – buttons, seashells, apple pips, etc. Monitor to help with language and check that learners stay on task and are thinking about their category only at this stage.
4. Planning (10 – 15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regroup learners so that there is one person from each category in a new group. The easiest way to do this is to number the learners while they are in their old groups, then ask all the number ones to sit together, all the number twos to sit together, etc. These new groups will be the groups learners will work in to invent their country. • Tell learners they are now going to plan their new country by completing the second column in the table on the worksheet or board. Explain that for each category, the learner who was in that brainstorming group should share what ideas they had while the rest of the group listen, then as a group they discuss and decide. If someone else has another idea too, that's OK – their final decision doesn't have to be one of the ideas from the brainstorm. Then they move on to the next category and repeat. • Monitor while learners are sharing their ideas and discussing to make sure they stay on task, help resolve any disputes and ensure they only spend a few minutes on each category.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When they are finished, they should decide on the name of their country. You might like to tell learners explicitly before they start that this is the last thing to do, not the first! Fast finishers could design a flag.
5. Production (15–20 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell learners that they are going to present their new country to the class, with a presentation entitled 'You should come and live in [Doughnutsia] because ...'. To prepare for this, they will need to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> make a map of their country write some sentences about why it's a good place to live, based on the categories, e.g. weather: 'In Doughnutsia it rains lemonade every day, so you always have something sweet to drink!' or money: 'In Doughnutsia you always have money because our currency is apple pips' draw a little picture to accompany each idea stick the map, sentences and pictures on chart paper to make a poster. In their groups, learners will need to decide who is going to do what to produce the poster. When they are ready, provide the materials they need and then monitor to check that they are on task. Fast finishers could design extra things for the country, such as a flag, a passport or a national costume.
6. Presentation (10–15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the groups are ready, they present their country to the class. If you have a large class, groups can present their country to other groups. The learners in the audience choose at the end whether they would like to live there or go on holiday there (rather than 'not live there', to be kinder in case one of the groups' countries isn't as popular).
Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners add an extra column to the table and complete information about another real country.

Contributed by

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